

House Republican Press Release

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Reps Hamzy & Williams Urge CT Congressional Delegation to Seek End to Emissions Testing Mandate



State Representatives Sean Williams, R-68th District, and William A. Hamzy, R-78th District, today urged Connecticut's five U. S. Representatives and two Senators to work for the elimination of a federal emissions testing mandate that has been difficult to administer, burdensome to motorists and ineffective in improving air quality in Connecticut.

In Connecticut, the motor vehicle emissions testing program, which the federal government requires states to provide, has been difficult and costly to administer, scarred by corruption and scandal, and plagued with technical problems that took months to correct. Worst of all, it has been ineffective in improving air quality in Connecticut, which is the program's main objective, the legislators said.

Last year, Agbar Technologies, the contractor that currently administers the program, had major problems with its computer software, which delivered inaccurate test results that resulted in many vehicles that actually passed the test receiving failing marks. In addition, equipment installed at many of the test stations was never checked or certified for accuracy, resulting in inaccurate measurements of polluting gases.

The extent of the problems forced the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to suspend testing April 22nd to give the company time to correct the problems, which finally were resolved November 12th. About 640,000 cars and small trucks missed tests while the program was on hold.

Emissions tests are supposed to take place every other year at a cost to motorists of \$20 per test. To put the program back on schedule, the DMV decided to require people who missed their tests to go back for another test this year - and take another test next year – meaning they will have to pay a total of \$40 for tests in two successive years.

“No matter how emissions testing programs are packaged, they are almost always predestined to fail. Instead of trying to fix a program that cannot be fixed or replacing it with others that offer variations on the same theme, we should simply eliminate testing,” Representative Hamzy said.

“The cars, pickup trucks and SUVs that have been built over the last few years are equipped with state of the art emissions systems that function reliably over the useful lives of the vehicles. When on-board anti-pollution equipment begins to malfunction, it usually happens when we are ready to trade in our old vehicles for new ones,” Representative Hamzy said. “As more new vehicles emitting fewer pollutants take to the roads, air quality in Connecticut will improve significantly – obviating the need for the state's expensive and ineffective emissions testing program.”

Representatives Williams and Hamzy said the emissions testing program will cost state taxpayers about \$7 million this year and another \$7 million in 2006.

"Since its inception, the state's emissions testing program has been of questionable value. It's time to stop wasting taxpayers' money on it," Representative Williams said. "The problems with the program weren't created by the taxpayers or Connecticut's motorists. It's time for us to put an end to the headaches it has given us over the years by eliminating this burdensome mandate in its current form once and for all."